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# Used Oil Fact Sheet

## Utah Department of Environmental Quality

### *Promoting a Healthy Environment*

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#### What Is Used Oil ?

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) and Utah's regulatory definition of used oil is as follows: ***Used oil is any oil that has been refined from crude oil or any synthetic oil that has been used and as a result of such use is contaminated by physical or chemical impurities.*** Simply put, used oil is exactly what its name implies - any petroleum-based or synthetic oil that has been used. During normal use, impurities such as dirt, metal scrapings, water, or chemicals can get mixed in with the oil, so that in time the oil no longer performs well. Eventually, this used oil must be replaced with virgin or re-refined oil to do the job at hand. Use oil includes synthetic oils, transmission and brake fluids, refrigeration oil, compressor oils, and hydraulic fluids. Used oil does **not** include products derived from vegetable or animal fats or petroleum distillates used as solvents. Used oil is **not** waste oil. Waste oil comes from oil wastes that have not been used, such as virgin fuel storage tank bottoms, or virgin fuel oil spill clean up residue.

#### Utah's Used Oil Program

In 1993 the Utah Legislature enacted Senate Bill 12, the "Used Oil Management Act." New standards for the collecting, processing, recycling, and reusing used oil were established as part of the Act. In addition, the statute prohibits the disposal of used oil in landfills and other areas which can result in contamination of groundwater and drinking water supplies, as well as cause air pollution problems associated with the emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's). The Act also established severe penalties for violations.

#### Contaminants

Used oil is not regulated as a listed hazardous waste by the EPA and Utah. Never mix used oil with other substances such as gasoline, solvents, antifreeze, kerosene or pesticides, since the resulting mixture is likely to be subject to hazardous waste regulations. When used oil comes into contact with a substance which may be hazardous the regulatory provisions become extremely complex. To avoid any possible liabilities, it is strongly recommended that the used oil be stored in a container or tank which is labeled and dedicated solely to used oil.

#### Disposal

Disposing of used motor oil by pouring it into storm or sewer drains, dumping it onto the ground, or placing it with household trash may create risks to human health and the environment. Human health is affected if rainwater carries metal-laden oil into underground streams and contaminates drinking water. It is very difficult to clean up groundwater once it has been contaminated. Used oil from a single oil change can ruin a million gallons of fresh water, a year's supply for 50 people. Used oil in surface water has the potential to harm wildlife by depleting the oxygen supply for fish and other aquatic life, and by hindering the ability of birds to fly. When plants are grown in soil or fed by water contaminated by used oil, they absorb (bioaccumulate) high concentrations of heavy metals. One of the indirect risks of such environmental dangers is the poisoning of the food chain, which ultimately affects human health.

Every Utahn is responsible to help keep our state free of improper oil disposal. It is estimated that up to sixty percent of the citizens change their own oil but if you don't, there is almost surely someone in your family or circle of friends who does. Please encourage everyone who handles used oil to locate the used oil collection center nearest you and use it. Used oil can be disposed of at the following sites:

### **Voluntary Collection Centers**

There are over 200 locations throughout Utah that serve as collection centers for used oil. Most are private businesses that have volunteered to collect used oil from the public. Major participants are from companies such as Jiffy-Lube, Pep Boys, Minit-Lube, Q- Lube, AutoZone, Checker Auto Parts, NAPA, and many smaller auto repair and maintenance shops. Several city shops, county landfills and UDOT road shops are also used oil collection centers. To find the used oil collection center nearest you, call the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) toll free, **1-800-458-0145**.

### **Tips For Do-It-Yourselfers (DIYers)**

- C** After performing an oil change, the DIY oil changer should carefully pour the used oil into a suitable recycling container. You may purchase specially designed containers at an automotive store, or you may reuse a sturdy, clean, preferably clear, container with a closeable lid. Do not use containers that previously contained household chemicals such as bleach. Plastic milk jugs work well.
- C** Label the container "Use Oil". Do not mix any other wastes with the used oil, such as paint thinners, gasoline or antifreeze.
- C** Drop off used oil and oil filters at collection centers during operating hours. Do not leave used oil and filters at a garage or collection center if it is not open for business.

### **A Word About Oil Filters**

To remove as much oil as possible from oil filters they should be gravity hot-drained (i.e., 60 degrees Fahrenheit, or higher ) using one of the following methods:

1. Puncturing the filter anti-drain back valve or the filter dome and hot-draining
2. Hot-draining and crushing
3. Dismantling and hot-draining
4. Any other equivalent hot-draining method which will remove the used oil.

There are currently no prohibitions for putting filters into household trash. However, please contact your local service stations or scrap dealers for possible filter recycling outlets.

### **For More Information**

This fact sheet is only an overview and may not contain detailed information which may apply to your situation. You should call one of these numbers for assistance if you have additional questions:

Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste at 1-801-538-6170

Department of Environmental Quality at 1-800-458-0145